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ARTICLE II.

THE EXTREMITY OF THE ROMANS : AND PRAISE BEFORE THE HOLY MYSTERIES:

SYRIAC TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS.

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Presented to the Society May 11th, 1887.

AMONG the Syriac manuscripts recently acquired by the Union Theological Seminary, through the missionary, Rev. James E. Rogers, of Oroomiah, is a volume in thick, heavy boards, covered with leather, $6 \times 4\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in dimension. It is written on thickish glazed paper; the written space on a page being $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3$ inches, surrounded by a double, ruled, black line, and comprising 14 or 15 lines to a page usually, but often 16, and now and then 13. It consists of 10 quires, all *quiniones* but the last, which is a quaternion; and therefore the manuscript contained originally 98 leaves, or 196 pages. The first five leaves are now so badly mutilated that they may be called wanting. Six pages of the book are occupied with rude colored drawings composed of straight lines and circles or parts of circles; sometimes with some words in Syriac; but the drawings appear to have no connection with the subject-matter. The first 169 pages are occupied with the Revelation of the Apostle Paul, substantially the same with that of which a translation by Rev. Dr. Justin Perkins was published in the *Journal*, vol. viii., though the variants are many. This is followed by the composition now under consideration, which extends from the top of page 170 to the middle of page 188;*

* The pages are not numbered in the MS., and the numbers I give are by count, including the five mutilated leaves.

and the rest of the volume is occupied by a hymn of "Praise before the Holy Mysteries." The title and subscription to the Revelation of Paul are in red, as are also those of the two other compositions. The writing is in a fair Nestorian, apparently of the last century; but the whole manuscript is somewhat careless as a copy. The subscription to the last composition is probably that intended for the whole book; but while it gives the month, it omits the year, and probably several other intended words. This subscription reads as follows:

"And this book was finished in the blessed and blessing Heziran, by the hands of me whose foolish name as deacon is Baryáká Jalúia, from Bar Kâzi, of Qerîtha Nâhrâ."

The second composition in the MS., "The Extremity of the Romans," I thus far find nowhere else. The nearest thing to it, as I judge from the title, is the MS. Sachau 221 (3), "Der zweite Brief, der aus dem Himmel auf Rom niedergefallen zur Zeit des Patriarchen Theodosius"; but this composition tells about the *third* letter that fell from heaven, in the time of Athanasius, patriarch of the Romans [i. e. Greeks]. It could not be the great Athanasius known to church history, for the time assigned in this document is A.D. 778, or about four centuries and a half later than his time.

Nor does the document seem to be a translation from the Greek, but an original composition; though I have not searched the patristic literature to see if there is extant any Greek composition corresponding. The nearest hint of its genesis that I can get is derived from the fact that it contains a number of Syriac expressions either identical with or closely resembling the Revelation of Paul. But the Revelation of Paul, as appears from a comparison of the Greek and Syriac, was doubtless originally Greek,* the extant Syriac being an amplified translation; and this "Extremity of the Romans" a later composition than that Syriac version. Now the age of the Greek composition was discussed by Tischendorf in the *Theol. Studien u. Kritiken* (Heidelberg), in 1851, with the result that its date was one or two years before the death of the emperor Theodosius; a result which later studies confirmed, and caused him to re-affirm in his *Apocalypses Apocryphae* (Prolegg., p. xvi.) Put this with the fact that the "second letter" of the Sachau MS. above referred to is ascribed to the time of the patriarch of Rome, Theodosius, a character very difficult to find, and it would seem that the lat-

* This too is Tischendorf's judgment, *Apocalypses Apocryphae Prolegomena*, p. xvii. "Utrumque textum comparanti non potest dubium esse quin Graeca antiquiorem et puriorem Syriacis libri formam conservaverint. Ita enim vero in his maxime libris fieri consuevit ut orientalium ingenia libere excolerent quae acceperant a Graecis." This last observation every Oriental scholar knows to be but a mild statement.

ter is the mere confusion of the emperor Theodosius with some of the Syrian patriarchs of that name; and that letter, as well as this "Extremity of the Romans," would seem to be the product of Oriental imagination, excited by a perusal of the Syriac amplified version of the Greek Apocalypse of Paul. The "Extremity" mentions both the first and the second letter; the first being ascribed to the year A.D. 731, the second to the year A.D. 739; while the third, treated of in the "Extremity," is ascribed to the year A.D. 778.

But a look at the chronology of the Syrian patriarchs would seem to show that it was a Syrian Athanasius and a Syrian Theodosius who are referred to in these compositions severally; and that the words "Rome" and "Romans" were used in relation to the Byzantine Greeks, as is frequent among the Syriac writers, nor is it hard to see "Constantinople" or "Antioch" in the "Rome." Even so there is difficulty; but the seat of the Nestorian patriarchs at Baghdad was called "the house of the Romans," or, as we should say in English, "the Greek palace." The nearest supposable Athanasius—whose name is also given as Theodosius—was the Nestorian patriarch who was the greater part of a century too late to be the hero of our story. He had been a Jacobite monk of Edessa. The nearest Theodosius, a little earlier than Athanasius, was still more than half a century too late for the last of these letters.

Considering the Nestorian transmission, if not origin, of this document, it may be too far away to look among the patriarchs of Antioch; but among them was an Athanasius (the fourth of that name) under whose patriarchate the first letter would fall, another under whom the second would come; but the third would belong to the time of their Ignatius I.

I am inclined to think the whole of Nestorian or Eastern origin, and the Athanasius referred to to be a Nestorian patriarch; but in any case the story is contrived by an author who was not too careful about the verisimilitude of his fiction. The fact that the hymn appended treats of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper reminds us of the excommunication of the Nestorian Athanasius above referred to, because of the heresy supposed to be contained in the words of his liturgy, "We break the heavenly bread."

The Syriac is good, though much marred by the mistakes of the somewhat ignorant and often hasty copyist. The whole manuscript shows the same qualities. I can do little more than guess at the age of the composition; but, from reasons that will occur to any scholar who reads it and considers its matter and language, should not consider it earlier than the tenth century. Its Scripture allusions and adaptations are

from the Peshitto, but sometimes with a change that shows a later habit, though the ancient character of the Peshitto language is not thereby changed. Thus in an adaptation of the language of Matthew v. 23, the word for 'brother' is changed to that for 'fellow'; but the very peculiar and uncommon expression of the verse remains unchanged.

In giving the text, I have attempted to give it absolutely unchanged, even in the punctuation; and to note the obvious errors of the scribe at the foot of the page. In cases where an emendation is evidently needed, but must be more or less conjectural, I have left my views to be inferred from the translation. I have not thought it worth while to burden the translation with many notes; for the value of this composition is greater in connection with other documents than alone by itself. The punctuation (in our sense) may easily be supplied by the reader. In general it is obvious; but where not so, I have shown my views in the translation. In remarking the frequent absence of punctuation where it was to be expected in Syriac documents, it should be remembered that often, among the Orientals, both Syriac and Arabic, the end of a line, or of a paragraph, or the insertion of a note with ink of a different color, seems to be assumed by the scribe as sufficient warning of a full stop. And when a MS. is copied *punctatim*, but the lines are not preserved, and the rubrics omitted, confusion in the punctuation naturally results.



To some it may seem a part of my duty to give all the Scripture references; but a careful examination has convinced me that this impracticable. Scripture words and phrases are so interwoven with the texture of the whole composition that to notice them all would greatly mar the pages, and add perhaps as much space as the entire text or translation, especially if each reference were to be discussed so as to tell the whole story of the allusion; and the fruit would not reward the labor. Moreover, a number of the Scripture words or phrases used occur in a number of places in the Bible. It is enough to say here that there are clear allusions to the Peshitto version throughout, but very few exact quotations; almost all the Scripture words and phrases being mingled with those of the writer of the composition. Where I have noted the citation of a passage, it is not to be understood that the quotation is entirely exact. Where, however, I have cited one passage, though the reader of the English Bible might imagine that more would be applicable, it is to be understood that no more will do in the Syriac except the one I have noted. Thus, where I have noted Psalm lxix. 28, for "book of life," the phrase is different from that in Philippians iv. 3, or from any of the parallels in the Book of Revelation.

The following is the Syriac text:

20: וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת-קוֹלְךָ וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת-עֲוֹןֶיךָ כִּי-עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-צִוְּיֹתַי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 21: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 22: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 23: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 24: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 25: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 26: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 27: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 28: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 29: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר
 30: שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי לֵאמֹר

⁴ In the margin, in red, is the numeral 2, marking this as the second division or chapter.

⁵ A somewhat later hand has added in the margin: **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم**.

⁶ Written , but  written above, with mark of substitution.

⁷ Isaiah vi. 3.

1. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 2. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 3. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 4. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 5. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 6. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 7. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 8. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :

9. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 10. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 11. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 12. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 13. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 14. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 15. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 16. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 17. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 18. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 19. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :
 20. אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹלְךָ :

8 A red numeral 3 in the margin marks here the beginning of the third division or chapter.

9 Compare Deut. x. 18; Ps. lxxxii. 3; Isa. i. 17.

0 Read אֲנִי הָיִיתִי

1 Read וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי with perhaps a 0 prefixed.

[illegible]

2 Read حكمة

³ Ps. lxix. 28.

⁴ Matt. v. 23 (with a noteworthy change of word).

[illegible]

⁶ This word is in the margin. ⁷ Read **مُسَدَّدٌ**

⁸ MS. ८७:२. The correction intended is doubtless that here given.

⁹ Matt. v. 13.

⁰ Heb. xiii. 17.

¹ Deut. xi. 14.

BY THE HAND OF GOD I WRITE

THE EXTREMITY OF THE ROMANS.

IN the year one thousand and ninety of the Greeks, on the twenty-fifth of Kanûn the first [*i. e.* 25 December, A. D. 778], when Athanasius the patriarch of the Romans, with twelve bishops, five hundred and thirty priests and deacons, and twenty-three thousand believers—the aged, the young men, and children, and virgins—were gathered in the great temple of Peter and Paul, and* were engaged† in prayer, on a sudden there was great darkness and blackness, such as never was its like. And a disciple of Athanasius went outside of the temple to see; and he saw a letter hanging above the temple in the air. And he went in to the patriarch and made known to him concerning the wonder that he saw. And Athanasius answered and said, ‘Remain ye now until we offer the holy mysteries, that are life and death to those that behold.’

And when the holy mysteries were finished, Athanasius went out, and much people besides. And he decreed a curse, and said, ‘Let every man that heareth this curse come to the church.’ And there was gathered much people, of priests and deacons that were seven thousand‡ in number, until there remained no one who did not come to the church, except those for whom it was not right to come.

And when they were gathered and were entreating of God, and offering penitence, because of the darkness that had befallen, they heard also a voice from heaven, such as never was its like, that said, ‘Repent, ye sons of men.’ (And when the people heard, they multiplied [their] tears toward God. Then Athanasius the patriarch arose and clad himself in a white priestly garment, and likewise all the people, and purified themselves from all defilement of sin; but Athanasius himself spread out his priestly garment§ and entreated.)|| ‘If you do not keep the day of Friday from the ninth hour until the ninth hour of the morning of Monday, as I commanded you, I will send upon you wicked men, who will shed your blood upon the earth; and famines, and shakings, and commotions, and pestilences, and the locust, and hail, and every evil plague, because of the day of holy Sunday; and if ye will not hear my words, I would wipe off all flesh from the earth, even unless I had sworn by the great Name, and had been working from God toward you by my mighty arm.’

* Literally, “who.”

† Or, “standing.”

‡ A much later hand has added in the margin: “and two hundred, and believers forty-seven thousand.”

§ The Syriac numeral here marks section or chapter II. The scribe evidently thought the following words to be the prayer of Athanasius; but it seems to me otherwise, *i. e.*, more words spoken by the voice.

|| A nearly or quite contemporaneous hand has added in the margin: “as in the days of Noah, because of adultery and fornication.”

And this letter fell upon his priestly garment, and he read it to the people three times. And the people answered and said, 'Alas !* Alas ! Alas ! For he is holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,† of whom the heaven and the earth are full of his glories, who has sent upon us his signs and his wonders for our consolation.'

And there was written in it thus : ' We sent to you one letter in the year one thousand and forty two of the Greeks [*i. e.* A. D. 731], and we sent another in the year one thousand and fifty [A. D. 739], to the purport that ye should turn to God ; and did not turn ; and, behold, again we send this third in the year one thousand and ninety of the Greeks [A. D. 778]. Now, then, see, and hear, and keep your tongues from lying, which ye speak in the church when ye offer the living and holy sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ ; and do ye keep your bodies from adultery and from fornication, and from all those things that are displeasing to God ; and do you keep this holy day of Sunday.

‡ 'Ye lawless ones, Wo to you because of the judgment of orphans, and of the widow, and of the poor, and of the destitute,§ who knock at your doors, and ye do no mercy to them—even that I might do mercy to you. Behold, also, to the Hebrews I gave the law through Moses in Mount Sinai|| and behold, they keep the sabbaths more excellently than ye, and give tithes and alms to the poor. But ye, who are clad in holy baptism and the sign of the glorious Trinity, have made yourselves to hear not nor comply with my words and my commandments. But if ye do not keep the day of Sunday, which is life-giving to your souls, I swear to you by my mighty arm that I will bring upon you great evil. But if now ye turn from your hateful ways and from your evil doings, so as to give alms¶ to the poor, and to keep Sunday and Friday, I will do to you mercy and favor like that which [I did] to the Greeks. But if ye will not hear, I will send for messengers upon you evil beasts, that shall devour the flesh of your sons and of your daughters before your eyes ; and I will send upon you winged and destroying serpents, because of your tongues which speak lying.

' Verily verily I say unto you, If ye do not keep the day of Sunday and of Friday, and number the full amount for fasting and prayer, I will avenge upon you bitter judgment in this world and in the world to come.

*Syr. ܐܠܝܐ *i. e.* "Heus !"

†So I render, for obvious reasons. But the passage is an amplified quotation from the Peshitto, Isaiah vi. 3, where the word correctly renders the Hebrew אֵלֹהִים. For other instances see R. Payne Smith's *Thesaurus*. Ephraim uses a different word for the same.

‡ The Syriac numeral here marks section III.

§ Syriac ܕܥܝܪܐ "and of the dry."

|| Mount Sinai, everywhere in this MS., is in the *plural* number.

¶ Literally, "righteousnesses."

‘Verily verily I say unto you, He that putteth away his wife and taketh another, the blood of John the Baptist shall be upon his head. And if ye do not turn from your evil ways, I will send upon you hail stones that come down from heaven, and will destroy you and all your possessions, until ye say, Lo, everything is fulfilled that I said concerning you. But if ye keep the holy day of Sunday, and the day of Friday, I will not do anything that I am minded to do.

‘Again I say to you, that whoever gives of his labor to the church, I will requite him in this world and in the world to come, thirty fold and sixty fold and a hundred fold; and I will write his name in the book of life. And every one that holdeth anger towards his fellow, and shall deliver his fellow to the authority on the day of Sunday, to him there shall not be forgiveness of sins. And every man that stirreth up evil against his fellow on the day of Sunday, cursed is all his labor. But on the day of Sunday be in love and unity one with another, because the Holy Spirit hovereth over you.

‘But I swear to you, brethren, by the great and mighty power of God, that—No! by the voice of thunders, and No! by the floods of rain, and No! by the swiftness of lightnings, and No! by the beauty of Seth, and No! by the perfection of Melchizedek, and No! by the prophets without sins, and No! by the just one who committed no fault, and No! by the fasting of righteous men, and No! by the tabernacle that was pitched* on Mount Sinai, and No! by the fasting of Moses nor yet that of Aaron, and No! by the four evangelists Matthew and Mark and Luke and John, and No! by the hour of laying hand upon the head of our Lord, and No! by the womb that bare him and the matrix in which he was given birth, and No! by his crucifixion,† and No! by his sepulchre in which he was buried, and No! by the judgment that he shall judge according to desert, and No! by the mystery of the twelve apostles, and No! by the sepulchre of Abel, and No! by the beauty of Enosh! and No! by the armies of myriads of myriads that serve before Him by night and by day—that this letter was not written by the hand of son of man, but by the finger of the living God! And every one who heareth this letter and doth not take a copy of it and put [it] in the place in which he standeth, or in the church, shall be under a curse. And whosoever doth take and read it, God will indeed bless him and pardon his sins; and he shall enter the bridechamber of Christ. Amen.

‘We beseech of you, brethren, that ye give alms‡ to the poor and to strangers, that ye may find mercy and favor before the mighty judgment seat of God most high, and that ye honor§ the

* Or, “by the shekinah that dwelt.”

† Or, “by [the fact] of his crucifixion.”

‡ Literally, “righteousnesses.”

§ The words for “and that ye honor” are omitted, but supplied in the margin *a prima manu*.

justice of God, that [justice which] sacrificed the lamb of the living God, him who beareth the sins of this world. And every one who rashly despises God's exhorters,* he is accursed, and the wrath that He sent upon Sodom shall tread him down; because they are the salt of the earth, and they are ministers of God, and teachers of life [i. e. salvation] to the sons of the holy church, and they watch for your souls. But if ye will not hear my words, I will send upon you evil plagues, and divers diseases in full measure hateful, and pustules, and ulcers, and tumors, so that worms shall swarm from them. And I will turn again the light of the sun into darkness, and will turn away my face from you.

"But if ye shall hear my words and turn to me, and keep the holy day of Sunday, I will multiply your fruits with your possessions, and will have mercy upon you and upon your sons, and I will bless your labor, and I will give to you the early and the latter rain in its season, and I will rain upon you blessing from this letter."

A voice was heard from heaven, saying, 'Believe, ye sons of men, and do not doubt.' And with the voice, the temple was filled with sweet and delightful odor, such as its like never was among men. And the voice of the armies of heaven was heard saying, 'Blessed be the honor of the Lord from his holy place, forever and ever. Amen.'

And I Athanasius, patriarch of Rome, wrote a copy of this letter, and sent it to all the extremities of the earth, and it went even to the rising of the sun. And, behold, I swear to you, brethren and beloved, that No! by the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, and No! by the glorious name of God most high, and No! by the gifts of angels, and No! by the troops of cherubs, and No! by the holiness of seraphs that cry 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' and No! by the prayers of Peter and Paul, and No! by the crowns of martyrs, and No! by the sufferings of confessors—that this letter was not written by the hand of son of man, but by the finger of the living God.

And now I entreat from you, brethren and beloved, that there be no man among you who will not believe in this letter—that be far [from you]! And every one into whose hands it hath come [i. e. who is able] to write a copy of it, [I entreat] that he send [it] to his fellow, forasmuch as it was given from the Holy Spirit, and it is right that it should be transmitted to all believers. And every one that heareth, and into whose hands it hath come [i. e. who is able], and he doth not take a copy of it to his house and to his place, shall be accursed. And every one that believeth, the mercies of God shall be upon him. Yea and Amen, and Amen!

* The word is a strong one, meaning "inciters," or "instigators."

The last composition in the manuscript is the hymn of "Praise before the Holy Mysteries."

The term "Holy Mysteries," or simply "Mysteries," which many translators of Syriac—and indeed of Greek as well—often translate by "secrets," often apparently misunderstanding the application of the term, means the Lord's Supper. The application of a like word to the same thing is regular among nearly all the Eastern Christians, and a very large part of the Western. Two hundred years ago it was generally supposed that the word "mass" had the same derivation and primitive meaning, as well as application; the derivation from "ite, missa est" being quite a modern affair. The following note of Joseph Scaliger will show the former ideas that prevailed respecting it. It is a part of his note on Revelation xvii. 5; the other part being too irrelevant and spicy for our purpose. I take it at second hand from the Elzevir-Whittaker Greek New Testament of 1633, which was printed at Leyden, but bears a London imprint:

"Ἐπόπται τῶν μυστηρίων erant, qui apud Christianos κατηχούμενοι. Et propterea duplicia erant μυστήρια τὰ μικρὰ dicata κατηχῆσαι ἐποπτῶν, τὰ μεγάλα τῇ τελετῇ, propterea elegantissimè Poëta vetus dixit, Ὑπνος τὰ μικρὰ τοῦ θανάτου μυστήρια. *De neuf nations Chrestiennes de diverses langues qui sont en nature aujourd'huy, il n'y en a pas une qui n'appelle la liturgie mystereum, comme tous ayans pesché du Grec μυστήριον, laquelle langue est mere & de la chose & du nom, πάντα περὶ πάντων τεραπευομένη. Bref toutes les langues appellent la Messe, Myster, Mystir, Mystiri, μυστήριον, mesmes les Latins. Car le mot de Messe on l'entend & ne l'entend-on point.*

Since the text and matter of this hymn are somewhat connected with the "Revelation of Paul" and the "Extremity of Rome," it seems altogether proper to give the Syriac text and a translation. It is noted by the punctuation as composed of four-verse stanzas, each verse octosyllabic. The text is given exactly as it is in the manuscript, except that the point of a *rish* or *dolath* is supplied where it is wanting in the manuscript. Foot-notes supply the necessary emendation. The following is the Syriac text:

دِخْتَمِهٖ . هَلَجِمِ حَمْدُكَ مَعْنَى . كَذَبْتُكَ تَدْمِغُ دِخْتَمِهٖ .
 مَلِكُ دِخْتَمِهٖ بَعْدَ حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو لَمَدَتِ حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو
 حَتْمِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو . هُوَ يَتْلُو تَدْمِغُ حَمْدِ .
 مَعْنَى حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ .
 هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ .
 مَعْنَى حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ .
 حَمْدِ حَمْدِ حَمْدِ . هُوَ يَتْلُو حَمْدِ .

٢٤٥٠

1. כִּי הָיְתָה אֵלֶיךָ חַיִּל . כִּתְּמוּ מַחֲבָרִים מִסֵּנִי . דִּבְתִּיכָא
 דְּסַעֲדָא מִסֵּנִי . מִן חֲרָשׁ מִלֵּי שְׁמַעֲנִי :- חַל מִן דְּזִיכָא מִן
 חֲרָשִׁי . וְעָלִי מִן חֲמָלָא דְדִמְסִי . וְחַל תִּדְנִי דְמִשְׁמַח דְּסִי .
 2. אֵלִי לִישׁ סִינָא כְּסִימָא דְּסִי :- אֶחָדָא דְּסִי דְּסִי לִסְעִלָא . מִכְּסִימָא
 מִסֵּנִי לֵא כְּסִימָא וְכִסְתִּימָא . דְּסִינָא חֲלָלָא . וְהַדְּחָא בְּ
 חִיבִי כְּסִימָא :- חַל דְּזִיכָא דְּסִי מִסֵּנִי . לִישׁ . חֲרָשִׁי מִלֵּי
 3. וְסִימָא . לְחֲרָשִׁי לֵא מִדְּחָא סִימָא . וְכִסְתִּימָא דְּסִי 3
 כְּסִימָא :- וְסִי לִסְעִלָא חֲמָלָא . דְּזִיכָא דְּסִי מִסֵּנִי . וְסִי
 דְּלֵא חֲלָלָא דְּסִי . בְּסִימָא דְּסִי 4. וְסִימָא :- וְסִימָא דְּסִי 4
 לִסְעִלָא . לֵא דְּזִיכָא דְּסִי מִסֵּנִי . וְחַל מִלֵּי דְּזִיכָא
 5. לִסְעִלָא סִי דְּסִי מִסֵּנִי :- וְסִי לִסְעִלָא דְּסִי
 מִסֵּנִי . 5. וְסִי דְּסִי מִסֵּנִי [] . וְסִימָא דְּסִי מִסֵּנִי .

⁴ Psalm civ. 15.

⁵ At this point the scribe made a mistake; writing first part of a

The following is the translation, keeping line (verse) for line (verse) to the original :

PRAISE BEFORE THE HOLY MYSTERIES.

Let us take the body that maketh us pass over
To the fearful place without terror ;
And drink the cup of salvation,
That cometh down to us from on high, his drink-giving.

When the body is divided [or, broken],
Every man shall behold for himself [*lit.*, in his (own)
person].
Upon the body resteth fire,
And upon the cup a flame.

Between the fire and the flame
Standeth the priest and the sanctified.
The priest is greater than an angel,
And is more excelling fiery.*

Christ made him mediator
Between God and humanity,
That he might put quiet and peace
Between sons of men and spiritual ones.

And whosoever curseth the priest,
He is cursed by night and by day;
The hours of night curse him,
And moon and stars in the firmament.

Three doves went out to the wilderness
After the heavenly eagle:
The Samaritan [woman], the Canaanite [woman],
And the sinful [woman] that anointed his feet.

To the Samaritan [woman] he gave water,
And to the Canaanite [woman] healing;
And to the sinful [woman] that anointed his feet
He said, Thy debts are forgiven.

Hannah the daughter of Penuel
Embraced him, also kissed him;
And the Spirit rested on her lips,
And she prophesied concerning him.

Redeemer of the ages† is he,
And Lord of all created things;
And his power is in height and depth;
And he gave his disciples commandment

* The Syriac word is a peculiar epithet of the angels. † Or, "worlds."

That they should be healing all the sick,
 And all the plagued, and all in affliction.
 Blessed is he that arose* from Mary
 And became a man by his own will,

And gave life to† Adam, and to his offspring,
 In the multiplications of his goodness.
 And you his people Christ [raised to life],
 Redeemed by the blood of the Only-begotten.

May the King who is exalted‡ bless you,
 And receive your offerings.
 And may he give life to§ your sons and your daughters,
 And hear in his love your prayers.

May Christ give rest to your departed,
 And pardon to you your sins,
 And fill you with good things to come,
 And for his kingdom make you worthy.

To him be praise from every mouth,
 And his love and his favor [be] entering in
 From age even unto age,||
 And to a generation of generations. Yea and Amen.

Proceed at its close (and to be said with a loud voice) :

We have hope and confidence
 In Jesus Christ the Savior,¶
 Who maketh abound his love and favor
 From his treasure full of might.

Every one that eateth of his body
 And drinketh of the cup of his blood,
 And every man that believeth in him,
 Hath life in himself [*lit.*, in his (own) person].

They who eat of this bread,
 Their souls [have] no taste of death;
 And their bodies, in this world
 And in that which is to come, possess delight.

Every one that eateth in faith,
 To him the body is full of brilliancy;
 To his body sin approacheth not;
 And his soul is a river** in the kingdom.

* i. e., rose like the sun.

† Literally, "the King of exaltation."

‡ Or, "Forever and still ever."

** I suspect a mistake: ἡμέρα for ποταμός. The emendation would substitute "light" for "river."

† Or, "saved."

§ Or, "save."

¶ Or, "the life-giver."

This heavenly bread,
Which the mouth life-giving* spake,
Is unceasingly spiritual ;
He gave it in fiery† mystery.

This bread sustains the heart,‡
As David, who maketh wise, declared ;
And every soul that eateth this bread
Liveth thereby, yea is raised again.

This bread enliveneth the understanding,
And enricheth it with splendors ;
And to the body decreeth quiet
And to the soul multiplieth joys [or, passovers].

Eat and be filled, O ye hungry !
That ye hunger no more forever§
And be ye possessing from him
Good things imperishable.

This it is that delivereth from fire ;
This it is that showeth light ;
This it is, in which possess honor
The soul and the body together.

This wine, every one that drinketh it
Cometh not into judgment forever,
But enjoyeth delight in a new life
In the day that the dead are renewed.

Every one that is intoxicated with this wine
Thinketh that fire is cold ;
And he that tasteth of it a particle
Shall not see the darkness of the grave.

By this sorrows are endured,
By this joys are made joyful.
In this the churches exult ;
And they sanctify it with praise

Again for the people of Christians,
Who have the life-giving|| mysteries ;
That they may therefrom be sustained,
And hunger no more forever.¶

Every one that believeth in this body
And drinketh of this wine,
Therein he seeth the light
Of that kingdom which passeth not away.

* Or, "saving."

† Quoted from Psalm civ. 15.

|| Or, "saving."

‡ That is, angelically fiery.

§ Literally "for an age of times."

¶ Or, "for an age of times."

The colophon of the manuscript, which is added above (in its place) at the end of the Hymn, perhaps deserves a little more attention than I have given it. It seems to bear the marks of very negligent copying and abbreviating from an older manuscript; with inadvertent omissions, and some supplementing by the copyist. Translated literally, keeping the order of words, it runs thus: "And is finished by my hands this book blessed and blessing Heziran * who by his name [is, or, am] Deacon fool Baryachâ Jalûiâ who [is] from Bar Kazi who [is] from Qerithâ [i. e., village] Nahrâ." Whether the "blessed and blessing" refer, as usual in subscriptions, to some place of writing [omitted by the copyist]; or, as most natural to the construction as the words stand, to the book; or, as is frequent, to the month; is a question that suggests itself at the start. I incline to the first supposition of the three. The omission of the preposition before "Heziran," as well as the misapplied plural points over the word, suggest that a full date was present in the archetype, and that in the date occurred the phrase "in the month Heziran." The latter part of the colophon, after the diamond punctuation-mark, probably refers to the latter copyist.